

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 00207 190758Z

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03
INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-06 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03 SP-02
CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 NSC-05 SS-15 STR-04
CEA-01 L-03 H-01 PA-01 PRS-01 IGA-02 ORM-02 DHA-02
IO-13 /103 W

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R 190644Z JAN 77

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2768

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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DEPARTMENT PASS AID

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAID, LE, US

SUBJECT: SUMMARY OF US TECHNICAL TEAM ACTIVITIES

REF: (A) BEIRUT 0191, (B) BEIRUT 0167

1. A FIVE-MAN US TECHNICAL TEAM VISITED LEBANON FROM JAN 9-16. THE TEAM WAS HEADED BY BLAINE RICHARDSON, DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE AID OFFICE OF MIDDLE EAST AFFAIRS, AND INCLUDED CHRISTIAN HOLMES, DEP DIR, AID OFFICE OF FOREIGN DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE; ERNEST BALL, PORT OPERATIONS CONSULTANT; CHARLES DEAN, HOUSING CONSULTANT; AND JAMES STEPHENSON, GEN ENGINEERING CONSULTANT.

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PAGE 02 BEIRUT 00207 190758Z

2. THE EVENING OF THEIR ARRIVAL, THE TEAM MEMBERS ACCCOMPANIED BY THE CHARGE MET WITH THE PRIME MINISTER AT HIS RESIDENCE IN SUBURBAN BEIRUT. IN AN HOUR-LONG TOUR D'HORIZON, HE DISCUSSED LEBANON'S ECONOMIC SITUATION AND RECONSTRUCTION NEEDS (REF A).

3. THE NEXT DAY, MONDAY, JAN 10, A GENERAL MEETING WAS HELD BETWEEN

THE AMERICAN TEAM AND A GROUP OF 20 LEBANESE EXPERTS, HEADED BY DR. SALAH SALMAN, MIN OF HOUSING AND COOPERATIVES. AFTER BRIEF INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY THE LEADERS OF THE TWO SIDES, THREE SUB-COMMITTEES WERE FORMED TO DEAL WITH EMERGENCY RELIEF, THE PORT OF BEIRUT, AND HOUSING.

4. EACH SUB-COMMITTEE WAS COMPOSED OF ONE US TEAM MEMBER AND FIVE OR SIX GOL EXPERTS. ON THE RELIEF SUB-COMMITTEE, MR HOLMES WAS THE US REP, AND HESHAM AL-HAJJ, ACTING CHAIRMAN OF THE GREEN PLAN, THE SENIOR

LEBANESE MEMBER. ON THE PORT SUB-COMMITTEE, MR BALL WAS THE US REP, AND DR. ASSEM SALAAM, VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COMMISSION FOR ENLARGING THE PORT, THE SENIOR LEBANESE MEMBER. ON THE HOUSING COMMITTEE, MR DEAN WAS THE US REP, AND FOUAD ZEBIANE, DIR GEN OF HOUSING, THE SENIOR

LEBANESE MEMBER.

5. ON TUESDAY, JAN 11, THE ENTIRE US TEAM, ACCCOMPANIED BY LEB OFFICIALS, TOURED THE CENTER OF BEIRUT, THE PORT, AND DAMAGED HOUSING AREAS ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE CITY. ON WEDNESDAY, THURSDAY, AND FRIDAY

MORNINGS, THE SUB-COMMITTEES MET FOR THREE TO FOUR HOURS EACH.

6. THE ADDITION TO THE SUB-COMMITTEE SESSIONS, THERE WERE NUMEROUS OTHER MEETINGS. MR RICHARDSON ACCOMPANIED BY THE CHARGE CALLED ON ALL MEMBERS OF THE CABINET, EXCEPT FOR FON MIN BOUTROS, TO DISCUSS RELIEF AND RECONSTRUCTION PRIORITIES. MR RICHARDSON ALSO MET WITH DR JAMES COWAN, PRES OF THE AM UNIV BEIRUT AND HIS DEANS; VISITING AUB TRUSTEE NAJIB HALUBY; JEAN HOEFLIGER, DIR OF THE ICRC IN LEBANON; SIR PETER

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PAGE 03 BEIRUT 00207 190758Z

WAKEFIELD, BRITISH AMB; HUBERT ARGOD, FRENCH AMB; OMAR MESSAIKE, DIR GEN OF THE PRIM MIN'S OFFICE; ADNAN KASSAR, PRESIDENT OF THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE; GUENTHER NEUBERT, GEN MANAGER OF CHASE MANHATTAN BANK IN BEIRUT; GEORGES MUJAIS, DIR GEN OF THE MIN OF FINANCE AND HIS THREE KEY DIRECTORS FOR THE BUDGET, INCOME TAX, AND INTERNAL REVENUE; ROGER CHEMALI, DIR GEN FOR TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION; AND DR. ALBERT BADRE OF BEIRUT UNIVERSITY COLLEGE.

7. MR HOLMES MET WITH AUH OFFICIALS; DR WOLFE BULLE, ICRC; JOSEPH THOMPSON, WORLD LUTHERAN FOUNDATION; ANDRE KARAM, SAVE THE CHILDREN FOUNDATION; DRS SALIM HANOUCH, ECWA, AND FERNAND SCHELLER, UNDP; FATHER MARTIN V McDERMOTT, CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES; ABDEL MAWLA EL-SOLH, UNHCR; ROBERT PREVOT, DIR OF UNRWA IN LEBANON; AND JACQUELINE ABED EL-MASSIH, WHO. MR DEAN MET WITH MICHEL MURR, A LOCAL ENTREPRENEUR. MR STEPHENSON, IN ADDITION TO WORKING CLOSELY WITH MR BALL ON PORT PROBLEMS, ALSO MET WITH MURR AS WELL AS WITH FOUAD BIZRI, DG OF THE OFFICE OF ELECTRICITY; ZUHAIR BEYDOUN, DG OF CIVIL AVIATION; MAURICE

GHAZUL AND GEORGE HATEM, TELECOMMUNICATIONS SPECIALISTS OF THE PPT; HOHAMMAD FAWAZ, DIR GEN OF URBANIZATION; AND ARMEN MINASSIAN, TRANSPORTATION SPECIALIST.

8. ON FRIDAY, JAN 14, THERE WAS ANOTHER GENERAL MEETING OF EXPERTS ON BOTH SIDES. AT THIS TIME, THE US REP ON EACH SUB-COMMITTEE GAVE A BRIEF ORAL REPORT ON HIS GROUP'S WORK. DR SALMAN GAVE A LUNCHEON IN HONOR OF THE TEAM ON JAN 13, AND THE CHARGE RECIPROCATED WITH A RECEPTION ON JAN 14, WHICH WAS ATTENDED BY FOUR MINISTERS AS WELL AS OTHER GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS.

9. ON SATURDAY MORNING, JAN 15, THE ENTIRE TEAM ACCCOMPANIED BY THE CHARGE CALLED ON PRES SARKIS TO GIVE HIM A PRELIMINARY REPORT OF THEIR FINDINGS (REF B). IMMEDIATELY AFTERWARDS, TWO MEMBERS OF THE TEAM
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PAGE 04 BEIRUT 00207 190758Z

ESCORTED BY LEBANESE OFFICIALS VISITED DAMAGED HOUSING AREAS IN DAMOUR AND ZAHLE. THAT AFTERNOON, IN RESPONSE TO CONSIDERABLE PRESS INTEREST,
THE ENTIRE TEAM PARTICIPATED IN A NEWS CONF AT THE EMB ATTENDED BY ABOUT 25 AM, LEB, AND FON CORRESPONDENTS.

10. THE TEAM DEPARTED JAN 16 AND WILL BE REPORTING ITS RECOMMENDATION
AND FINDINGS UPON ITS RETURN TO WASHINGTON.

11. COMMENT: THE GOVERNMENT OF LEBANON WAS VERY INTERESTED IN THE TEAM'S VISIT, AS WITNESSED BY ITS MEETINGS WITH BOTH PRIM MIN AL-HOSS AND PRES SARKIS. THROUGHOUT THE WEEK, SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, INCLUDING MINISTERS, WENT OUT OF THEIR WAY TO MAKE THEMSELVES AVAILABLE TO TEAM MEMBERS. THE GOVERNMENT
WAS ALSO INTERESTED IN GETTING MAXIMUM PUBLICITY AND THE TEAM'S ACTIVITIES WERE FULLY REPORTED ON TELEVISION, RADIO AND IN THE PRESS. AS INDICATED ABOVE, THE TEAM HAD AN EXTREMELY BUSY SCHEDULE. ALL OF ITS MEMBERS WORKED LONG AND HARD, AND THE EMB WAS VERY IMPRESSED BY THEIR ENERGY, COMPETENCE AND PROFESSIONALISM.
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